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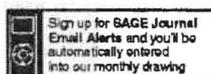
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Cognition, Emotion, and Neurobiological Development: Mediating the Relation Between Maltreatment and Aggression

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Child maltreatment has been consistently linked to aggression, yet there have been few attempts to conceptualize precisely how maltreatment influences the development of aggression. This review proposes that biases in cognitive, emotional, and neurobiological development mediate the relation between childhood maltreatment and the development of aggression. In addition, it is posited that physical abuse and neglect may have differential effects on development: Physical abuse may result in hypervigilance to threat and a hostile attributional bias, whereas neglect may result in difficulties with emotion regulation because of a lack of emotional interactions. These processes may be "hardwired" into neural networks via the overactivation of certain brain regions and dysfunctional cognitive processes. The theoretical and necessarily speculative nature of this article is intended to stimulate hypotheses for future research. Only when the adverse effects of maltreatment on brain and cognitive development are understood can scholars hope to develop more effective interventions to alter the developmental pathway to aggression.

Key Words: maltreatment • aggression • physical abuse • neglect • cognition • emotion regulation

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